

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **RABIES ALERT: RABID FOX CAPTURED IN NORTH SALEM**

The Westchester County Department of Health is issuing a rabies alert to residents who may have had contact with a rabid gray fox in the vicinity of Vail Lane in North Salem on or before Saturday, September 16.

The rabid fox was captured and submitted for rabies testing on September 16 after displaying highly aggressive behavior towards people and other animals. The fox was confirmed positive for rabies on September 19. One person bitten by the fox is receiving post exposure rabies treatment and two dogs received rabies booster shots after encounters with this fox.

“Anyone who believes that they or a pet may have had contact with this fox, should contact the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at (914) 813-5000 to assess the need for lifesaving rabies treatment,” said Westchester County Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD. “Anyone bitten by a rabid animal, or having contact with its saliva, may need to receive immediate rabies vaccination.”

Rabies is a fatal disease that is spread through the bite or saliva of infected animals. Unusual behavior may be the first sign of rabies in an animal. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or it may appear passive and lethargic. Staggering and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted. Animals most commonly infected are raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. However, domestic animals such as cats and dogs are also at risk because they can contract rabies from wild or stray animals.

Keeping your pet’s rabies vaccinations up to date is important for protection against rabies. New York State law requires dogs, cats and ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies and receive regular booster shots. To assist Westchester residents, the health department offers free rabies vaccine clinics for pets throughout the year. The next **free rabies vaccination clinic** will be held on **Sunday, October 29 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Humane Society of Westchester, 70 Portman Road in New Rochelle**. Residents can walk in with their dog, cat or ferret between those hours, as no appointment is needed.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000, 24 hours a day. After regular business hours, callers should follow instructions in the recorded message for reporting public health emergencies.

To learn more about rabies and its prevention, visit [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/wchealthdept](https://facebook.com/wchealthdept) or follow us on Twitter @wchealthdept.